

HOUSE BILL 2458

By McDaniel

AN ACT to name a segment of State Route 69 in Decatur County in honor of the late Sergeant Guy Stokes, Jr., United States Army, and his father, the late Guy Stokes, a decorated veteran of World War II.

WHEREAS, from time to time, the members of this General Assembly have seen fit to name certain highways and bridges to honor the memory of those courageous members of the United States Armed Forces who gave their lives in the defense of our nation; and

WHEREAS, no person is more deserving of this honor than the late Sergeant (Sgt.) Guy L. Stokes, Jr., United States Army, who died in the line of duty while serving in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, Sgt. Stokes followed the patriotic tradition for which Decatur County and the Volunteer State are renowned by serving with distinction as a soldier in Company D, 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry, 198th Infantry Brigade, United States Army; and

WHEREAS, like thousands of others of this nation's sons and daughters, Sgt. Stokes did not shrink from serving in combat, believing in the justice of the cause to protect our national security and liberty and to fight Communist aggression; and

WHEREAS, as a Squad Leader for Company D, Sgt. Stokes was quick to grasp the implications of new problems with which he was faced as a result of the ever changing situations inherent in a counterinsurgency action and to find ways and means to solve those problems; and

WHEREAS, through his untiring efforts and professional ability, he consistently obtained outstanding results for the U.S. Army; and

WHEREAS, while leading a reconnaissance mission with Company D on May 16, 1970, Sgt. Stokes distinguished himself by his intrepid actions in confronting the enemy; and

WHEREAS, he alertly spotted two camouflaged booby traps that had been placed across the friendly elements route of travel and immediately stopped the advance of his comrades; and

WHEREAS, with complete disregard for his personal safety, Sgt. Stokes advanced cautiously along the trail in order to investigate and assess the enemy threat; however, he inadvertently triggered a concealed hostile mine as he advanced and was mortally wounded; and

WHEREAS, through his unselfish concern for his fellow soldiers, Sgt. Stokes was responsible for saving the lives of his comrades, and his heroic actions would subsequently serve as an inspiration to his entire unit; and

WHEREAS, Sgt. Stokes's personal heroism, professional acumen, initiative, zeal, and devotion to duty are in keeping with the finest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Army; and

WHEREAS, he was posthumously awarded the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, and the Purple Heart for his gallantry in action against the enemy on that fateful day; and

WHEREAS, Guy Stokes, Jr. served with great courage and gallantry, giving his life for his country and for the cause in which he believed, and for that ultimate sacrifice, he deserves proper recognition; as a member of the United States Army, he proudly continued an essential tradition of American society: the concept of the citizen-soldier; and

WHEREAS, Sgt. Stokes's dedication to excellence in the military and his love of his family, his fellow soldiers and his country, exemplified in his sacrifice of life itself in defense of all that he held dear, stand as enduring examples of all the characteristics that have ensured the continued freedom of our nation and the preservation of its ideals over the course of our history; and

WHEREAS, when he entered the service of the United States Army, Guy Stokes, Jr. was carrying on a family tradition, as his father, Guy L. Stokes, served with distinction in Europe during World War II as a medic in the 82nd Airborne Division; and

WHEREAS, like his son, Mr. Stokes exhibited little concern for his personal safety and was wounded at Nijmegen Crossing in Holland; also like his son, he received the Silver Star and the Bronze Star for his gallantry and heroism in the face of enemy aggression; and

WHEREAS, a native of the Sugar Tree community in Decatur County, Guy Stokes passed away on September 5, 2007, leaving behind a loyal and loving family that includes his wife, Deane Caperton Stokes; his daughters and sons-in-law, Gwen and Ron O'Neil and Connie Jo and David Fisher; his sons and daughters-in-law, Mark and Denise Stokes and Eric and Maggie Stokes; his son, Max Stokes; and many grandchildren and great grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, in addition to Guy Stokes, Jr., Mr. Stokes was preceded in death by his son, Larry Stokes; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly wishes to provide for a permanent memorial to this heroic father and son who sacrificed so much for their beloved country; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the segment of State Route 69 in Decatur County from the intersection of such route with W.O. Baker Road at Log Mile 37.75 to Log Mile 41.96 of such route 0.46 miles south of Interstate 40 is hereby designated as the "Guy Stokes and Guy Stokes, Jr. Memorial Highway" in recognition of the life of valor and death in combat of Sergeant Guy L. Stokes, Jr., United States Army, and his father, Guy Stokes, himself a decorated Army veteran of World War II.

SECTION 2. The Department of Transportation is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers designating the bridge described in Section 1 as the "Guy Stokes and Guy

Stokes, Jr. Memorial Highway". The cost of such signage shall be funded in accordance with Tennessee Code Annotated, § 54-1-133.

SECTION 3. The erection of such signs shall be within the guidelines prescribed by the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.

SECTION 4. This act shall become operative only if the federal highway administrator advises the Commissioner of Transportation in writing that the provisions of this act shall not render Tennessee in violation of federal laws and regulations and subject to penalties prescribed therein.

SECTION 5. The appellation "Guy Stokes and Guy Stokes, Jr. Memorial Highway" provided for in this act is for honorary purposes only and nothing contained herein shall be construed as requiring the alteration of any address, or the governmental system for assigning addresses, in any county, municipality or other governmental entity affected by this act.

SECTION 6. Nothing contained in this act shall be construed as requiring the alteration of any previously named segment or segments of any highway described in this act as the "Guy Stokes and Guy Stokes, Jr. Memorial Highway".

SECTION 7. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.